

BIRDS

By Aristophanes

Translated and adapted by Graham Kirby

with further adaptations by Daren Blanck

Characters in the Play

EUELPIDES *an Athenian (May become EUELPIDEA if played by a girl)*

PITHETAERUS *an Athenian*

The **CHORUS OF BIRDS**

TROCHILUS *servant to Eops*

EOPS

LEADER of the **Chorus of Birds**

HERALD & MESSENGER 1

A BIRD & MESSENGER 2

PRIEST *from Athens*

POET *from Athens*

METON *a geometrician from Athens*

POLITICIAN *from Athens*

IRIS *a messenger goddesses*

SPY 1 *an informer from Athens*

SPY 2 *an informer from Athens*

PROMETHEUS *a Titan*

POSEIDON *the god of the sea*

TRIBALLUS *a foreign god (May be the same actor as TROCHILUS)*

HERCULES *a hero*

(**SCENE**:- outside of Athens. EUELPIDES and PITHETAERUS enter with birds on their hands)

EUELPIDES *(to his bird)* So which way now?

PITHETAERUS *(to his bird)* What? You think I should go that way?

EUELPIDES *(listening to his bird)* You said that last time and we've ended up here again!

PITHETAERUS Great! We're lost!

EUELPIDES You mean, you don't know the way home either?

PITHETAERUS Nope.

EUELPIDES I'd say something rude but there are teachers here.

PITHETAERUS It's never stopped you before.

EUELPIDES Well, man, we were well and truly mugged! Two birds to tell the way and we still got lost. *(To his bird)* No! I'm not going that way again. *(To PITHETAERUS)* And which way does your bird say we should go?

PITHETAERUS He says that, if I don't feed him soon, he's gonna eat my fingers.

EUELPIDES We're doomed! But perhaps we should explain to the audience what we're doing? Yeah? Ok. *(To audience)* We've had enough.

PITHETAERUS We're leaving this dump. We don't exactly hate the place, but if you thought Nicias was a bad ruler, you should try living beneath the iron thumb of Alcibiades.

EUELPIDES *(interrupting)* Lawyers! Bankers! Politicians! We've had enough of all of them. So we're leaving and going to live with the birds. Anyplace has got to be better than here!

PITHETAERUS Here! Look!

EUELPIDES What, man?

PITHETAERUS My crow's pointing to something up there!

EUELPIDES What do we do?

PITHETAERUS Do you know what to do?

EUELPIDES Dunno. Make bird noises, I guess.

EUELPIDES and **PITHETAERUS** (*calling out making silly bird noises*) EEEEpops, EEEEEpops!

HERALD (*to audience*) Yes, the Greeks really thought birds sounded like that.

TROCHILUS (*rushing out of a thicket*) Who's there? Who calls my master?

PITHETAERUS (*in terror*) By Apollo! What a big beak he has!

TROCHILUS (*equally frightened*) Bird-catchers! Run everyone!

EUELPIDES We're not bird-catchers. We're not even men.

TROCHILUS What are you, then?

EUELPIDES We're birds!

TROCHILUS Yeah right. And I suppose he's a bird as well, is he?
(*Points to PITHETAERUS*)

PITHETAERUS (*weakly*) Yes...

EUELPIDES And what about you? What are you?

TROCHILUS I am a slave-bird. You see, my master was turned into a bird and he begged me to become a bird too. So I did.

EUELPIDES Well, can you call your master for us?

TROCHILUS But he's just having his afternoon nap.

EUELPIDES Wake him up.

TROCHILUS Trust me, man, he'll be angry. But if you like – (*Exit TROCHILUS into the thicket*)

EPOPS (*from within*) Who wants me? Who woke me up?
(*Enter EPOPS looking very much like Elvis but with a great peacock tail*)

EUELPIDES By Hercules! What a bird! Beautiful plumage!

EPOPS Thank you. Thank you very much. But who are you? What do you want?

EUELPIDES We? We are... (*covers his mouth so the other birds don't hear*) humans

EPOPS Speak up man!

EUELPIDES (*Louder*) Humans. (*The other birds react in shock*)

EPOPS Really. And what brings you here?

EUELPIDES We've come to see you.

EPOPS Me? What for?

EUELPIDES Well, you were a man once, right? Like us, you had money troubles, grades, ex-girlfriends causing trouble. Then you became a bird and you left all your troubles behind you. We wanna be like you.

EPOPS So you're looking for a city better than Athens, are you?

EUELPIDES No, not really better, but one with less grief, man.

EPOPS Well, tell me, man, what kinda city would you most like to live in?

EUELPIDES The kinda place where your neighbour knocks on your door and says "Come over, we're having a party all day and there are no teachers here."

EPOPS That's what I call a hard life, man. (To *PITHETAERUS*) And what about you?

PITHETAERUS I want the same as him. No teachers.

EPOPS And what else?

PITHETAERUS The kinda place where you come back from a hard day of doing nothing and there's someone there to turn on the TV for you.

EPOPS I see you are fond of suffering.

EUELPIDES So tell us, what is it like to live with the birds?

EPOPS Well, it's not a bad life. In the first place, there's no money.

EUELPIDES That does away with a lot of mischief.

PITHETAERUS And eliminates a lot of bankers.

EPOPS And we eat well too.

EUELPIDES Sounds good.

PITHETAERUS Hang on a minute. I think I might have a cunning plan.

EPOPS And what's that, man?

PITHETAERUS We should found a new city.

EUELPIDES That's what we're trying to do. *Find* a city.

PITHETAERUS No! We should found our own city!

EPOPS We birds? But what sort of city should we build?

PITHETAERUS Seriously! Look down.

EPOPS I'm looking.

PITHETAERUS Now look up.

EPOPS I'm looking.

PITHETAERUS Turn your head round.

EPOPS Yes...

PITHETAERUS What have you seen?

EPOPS The clouds and the sky.

PITHETAERUS That's where we'll build our city. Somewhere between the ground and the sky!

EPOPS Great idea! But we'll have to get the birds to agree to it.

PITHETAERUS Great! And who is going to persuade them?

EPOPS You.

PITHETAERUS But I don't speak 'bird'.

EPOPS Don't worry, they speak quite good English these days.

PITHETAERUS So how do we get them here?

EPOPS Leave that to me. (*Calling offstage*) Epopopoi popoi popopopoi popoi!

PITHETAERUS That doesn't sound like English to me.

EUELPIDES Shut it!

PITHETAERUS Well, its not.

EUELPIDES Just be quiet, man!

EPOPS Epopopoi popoi popopopoi popoi!
(*nothing*) It's no good. They can't hear me.

PITHETAERUS Why don't we get the audience to help?

EPOPS Good plan.

EUELPIDES So what do they need to do?

EPOPS First say TORO. Everyone say TORO.

AUDIENCE TORO.

EPOPS Now say it four times TOROTOROTOROTORO.

AUDIENCE TOROTOROTOROTORO.

EPOPS Now put TIX on the end so it is TOROTOROTOROTOTIX.

AUDIENCE TOROTOROTOROTOTIX.

EPOPS One more time for practice: TOROTOROTOROTOTIX.

AUDIENCE TOROTOROTOROTOTIX.

EPOPS Now call out KIKKABAU KIKKABAU!

AUDIENCE KIKKABAU KIKKABAU!

EPOPS Now put them together. Like this:
TOROTOROTOROTOTIX KIKKABAU KIKKABAU!

AUDIENCE TOROTOROTOROTOTIX KIKKABAU KIKKABAU!

EPOPS Once more, and louder this time!

AUDIENCE TOROTOROTOROTOTIX KIKKABAU KIKKABAU!

PITHETAERUS Thank you. Can you see any birds?

EUELPIDES Not yet...

A BIRD (*entering*) Torotix! Torotix!

PITHETAERUS Look at all these birds... chickens... ducks... kestrels...

EUELPIDES Look, man, that bird looks just like Mr Moimoi.

PITHETAERUS What? You mean that bald eagle?

LEADER OF THE CHORUS Popopopopopo! Who called us?
Where is he?

EPOPS I called you!

LEADER OF THE CHORUS What do you want?

EPOPS These two men –

LEADER OF THE CHORUS Men!

CHORUS But we're birds, they're men, ok?

EUELPIDES We don't wanna hurt you –

CHORUS But we're birds, they're men, ok?
Attack them! Strike them Hit them Peck them.
Bite them. Cage them Feed them Pet them.
(**CHORUS** *rushes at the two men*)

EUELPIDES What do we do?

PITHETAERUS Wait a minute...

LEADER OF THE CHORUS Come on, birds. Let's go for the kill -

EPOPS (*stepping in front of the CHORUS*) What have these men done to you?

LEADER OF THE CHORUS They're men! Let's punish them.

EPOPS Despite their medical experiments on us they don't *mean* to harm us, let's hear what they have to say –

PITHETAERUS You promise to give us a fair hearing?

LEADER OF THE CHORUS I promise. And if I break my word, I'll spend the rest of my life doing extra homework.

PITHETAERUS So. Birds are cool. It almost goes without saying. But what people don't know is that, actually, they are king of the animals.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS Us, kings? Over what?

PITHETAERUS Over everything. Even Zeus himself.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS What?

PITHETAERUS Yes.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS I never knew that before!

PITHETAERUS So first I advise that the birds gather together in one city and that they build a wall of great bricks round the plains of the air and the whole region of space that divides earth from heaven.

EPOPS Sounds lovely.

PITHETAERUS And it'll be a lovely city. Free from all the worries on earth, none of the hassle. Come on, let's go and start work –

(Exit PITHETAERUS, EUELPIDES, and EPOPS)

CHORUS *(The CHORUS turns and faces the audience)*

So, they've formed a new world and that's right.

They're clever, done ok and they're bright.

But if any of you wants to be

A beautiful bird just like me

You can join us you know

So long as you show Y

our tails and your feathers all bright.

So why have they formed a new land?

Because the other is just underhand Its vain politicians

Their foolish ambitions

It gets in the way

We pretend it's ok

So let's hope this one turns out as they planned

You humans are rather ungracious

You treat birds badly and put us in cages

But now we're in charge In control by and large

So find our play funny

Or you can bet lots of money

We'll fly over and poo in your faces!

(PITHETAERUS and EUELPIDES return; they now have wings)

PITHETAERUS Man, you look ridiculous.

EUELPIDES What? Why?

PITHETAERUS You've got wings. You look like a goose.

EUELPIDES You don't look any better.

EPOPS So you two, what now?

PITHETAERUS First we have to give our city a name. Then we have to thank the gods.

EUELPIDES Good plan.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS So, what'll we call our city?

PITHETAERUS Shall we call it ... Sparta?

EUELPIDES Hmmmmm... yaken. What about naming it after someone really cool? Like (names him/herself)-ville ?

PITHETAERUS Definitely not.

EUELPIDES Well, we have a city in the clouds... and we're birds... let's name it after that!

PITHETAERUS What about Cloudcuckooland?

LEADER OF THE CHORUS I like it! And who'll guard us?

PITHETAERUS One of the birds, of course.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS One of us? What kind of bird?

EUELPIDES A chicken! After all they are really brave, and tasty, birds.

PITHETAERUS Right, now back to work! Let's start building our walls to protect ourselves. And also send messengers to the gods and to the earth to tell men and gods about our new city.

(Enter PRIEST)

Priest! It's high time we sacrificed to the new gods of Cloudcuckooland.

PRIEST Right. Are we ready? Oh god of swans, oh god of chickens, geese and ducks, and to the goddesses of goldfinches...

EUELPIDES And the ostrich goddess!

PRIEST ...to grant health and safety to the birds of Cloudcuckooland - to the pelican, the spoon-bill, the redbreast, the grouse, the peacock, the horned-owl, the teal, the bittern, the heron, the stormy petrel, the fig-pecker...

PITHETAERUS Stop it! I'm getting bored with your list of birds. Go away! *(Exit PRIEST and enter a POET)*

POET Oh, Muse! Let us praise blessed Cloudcuckooland in our poems!

PITHETAERUS What have we here? Who are you?

POET I am a poet.

EUELPIDES Look at you! You look ridiculous!

PITHETAERUS Anyway, why are you here?

POET I have composed a poem in honour of Cloudcuckooland, worthy of Homer himself!

PITHETAERUS But I am just celebrating its foundation with this sacrifice – I have only just named it!

POET Friends, Birds, countrymen, lend me your ears
I come not to bury Pithetaerus but to praise him
The evil that men do lives after them
The good oft forgot with the birds
So let it be with Pithetaerus.

PITHETAERUS But I'm not dead

POET Not yet... *(The POET puts out his hand) Ahem (Clears his throat, looks at his hand) Money please!*

PITHETAERUS But I don't have any money. Very well, have this. *(Hands the POET a cloak)*

POET My Muse will gladly accept this gift; but engrave these verses of Pindar on your mind.

PITHETAERUS *(To Euelpides)* It's impossible to get rid of this guy!

POET What wonderful creatures are birds! So wonderful I cannot find words –

PITHETAERUS Now I guess you're expecting more payment.

EUELPIDES Scrounger.

POET Hail Pithetaerus! *(The POET is pushed off the stage)*

PITHETAERUS *(To EUELPIDES)* How do all these people know about Cloudcuckooland already? Where are they coming from? *(Enter METON, with surveying instruments)*

METON I have come to you...

PITHETAERUS *(interrupting)* Yet another pest! What do you want?

METON I want to survey the plains of the air for you and help you plan a new town.

PITHETAERUS Eh? What? Who are you?

METON Who am I? Meton, the best town planner in all of Greece.

EUELPIDES What are these things?

METON My tools for measuring the air.

PITHETAERUS How?

METON With this ruler I set to work to draw a square within this circle; in its centre will be the market-place. Here we'll have all the streets that will lead, converging to this centre like a star. Oh, it'll be beautiful.

EUELPIDES (*looking first at Meton and then Pithetaerus*) It'll be beautiful.

PITHETAERUS Meton...

METON Yes?

PITHETAERUS Can you just walk over there?

METON Yes, I'm walking.

PITHETAERUS Now keep walking.

METON Yes, I'm walking.

PITHETAERUS And keep going until I can't see you.

METON What?

PITHETAERUS We don't want any of your sort here. Go away.
(Exit **METON** and enter a **POLITICIAN**)

POLITICIAN Where is Pithetaerus?

PITHETAERUS Who are you?

POLITICIAN I have been elected to come to Cloudcuckooland as a politician.

PITHETAERUS A politician! And who sends you here?

POLITICIAN The people!

PITHETAERUS Yeah right. Will you just pocket your salary, do nothing, and then go?

POLITICIAN Indeed I will. I am hoping to pocket as much money for doing as little as possible in the shortest amount of time.

PITHETAERUS Is that all?

POLITICIAN Not at all. I can give you new laws and boss you around, as well as lecture you and make you feel small. And did I tell you that I intend to take as much money from you as possible?

PITHETAERUS You might as well be going now. I already have your salary here.

POLITICIAN Really? Where?

PITHETAERUS Here. (*He points to the floor*) Come closer.

POLITICIAN Where is it? (*He bends over to look.*)

PITHETAERUS Here!
(*PITHETAERUS goes kicks the POLITICIAN in the rump*)

EUELPIDES Go away! We don't want your sort here either.
(Exit the **POLITICIAN**)

PITHETAERUS Will we never get any peace? Look, birds, here's a messenger.

MESSENGER (*running back and forth*) Where is Pithetaerus?

PITHETAERUS Here I am.

MESSENGER The wall is finished.

PITHETAERUS That's good news.

MESSENGER Oh, and it's a beautiful wall. The most beautiful wall I have ever seen – and I have seen some beautiful walls. More beautiful than the walls of Troy!

PITHETAERUS Excellent! And who built this wall?

MESSENGER Birds and only birds. They did it all themselves. Cranes came carrying stones. Puffins chiselled with them with their beaks. Ten thousand storks made bricks and water fowl carried water. Geese used their feet as spades to dig. Ducks carried bricks and the swallows came to work with their little beaks full of cement and spades on their backs. Birds again! Pelicans pecked the wood like carpenters! They all finished the wall together and now Cloudcuckooland is secure and guarded. (Exit **MESSENGER**)

LEADER OF THE CHORUS (*to PITHETAERUS*) Well! What do you say to that, Pithetaerus? The birds have done a good job, eh?

PITHETAERUS They have indeed. Now Cloudcuckooland is protected from the outside world! Oh, but look, here's another messenger.

SECOND MESSENGER (*rushing in*) Pithetaerus, I've got some terrible news!

PITHETAERUS What?

SECOND MESSENGER We have an invader!

PITHETAERUS An invader? Who?

SECOND MESSENGER A god sent by Zeus slipped past the chickens who were guarding the gates and is here in Cloudcuckooland.

PITHETAERUS What god was it?

SECOND MESSENGER We don't know that, I'm afraid.

PITHETAERUS Why were not guards sent against him at once?

SECOND MESSENGER We have dispatched the hawks, the kestrels, the buzzards, the vultures and the great-horned owls to track him down but they haven't found him yet...

PITHETAERUS Come on birds. Let's prepare to defend Cloudcuckooland from this invader.
(Enter **IRIS**)

PITHETAERUS Oh hello! It's not a god at all, but a goddess.

IRIS I come from Mount Olympus.

PITHETAERUS And who are you?

IRIS I am Iris, the messenger goddess.

PITHETAERUS Seize her, birds.

IRIS Seize me? You can't do that! I'm a goddess!

PITHETAERUS You snuck into our city, didn't you? Do you have a passport?

IRIS I'm a goddess!

PITHETAERUS I said, do you have a passport?

IRIS Of course I don't.

PITHETAERUS I'm afraid if you don't have a passport, you'll be arrested.

IRIS You can't treat me like this! I'm a goddess.

PITHETAERUS You sneak in here to Cloudcuckooland – a land that does not belong to you – and you act all surprised when we come to arrest you.

IRIS But I'm a goddess. I'm allowed anywhere.

PITHETAERUS So terrible is your crime against Cloudcuckooland that I sentence you – to death!

IRIS But I'm immortal. I can't die.

EUELPIDES I'd like to see you say that after we've chopped off your head.

PITHETAERUS You gods expect to get away with murder. Coming into Cloudcuckooland without asking permission! Really! But tell me, where are you flying to?

IRIS I am the messenger of Zeus to mankind. I am going to tell them to sacrifice at the altars and to fill their streets with the smoke of burning fat.

PITHETAERUS Which gods are you speaking about?

IRIS All of us. The gods of Olympus.

PITHETAERUS Just gods on Olympus?

IRIS Are there others?

PITHETAERUS Men worship birds as gods now. So Zeus can forget about his sacrifices – because we want them too.

IRIS Zeus'll get very angry if he doesn't get his sacrifices. He loves a good sacrifice, does Zeus.

PITHETAERUS Oh shut up. You're lucky I'm in a good mood today, otherwise you'd be for it, you would. As it is, just go back to Zeus and tell him there's a new bird on the block and he'd better watch his step from now on.

IRIS

I will, but you'd better be careful... *(Exit IRIS)*

PITHETAERUS

You know, it's strange that the messenger we sent down to earth never returned.

EUELPIDES Oh look! Here he is! *(Enter the HERALD)*

HERALD O wise Pithetaerus, o illustrious Pithetaerus, o gracious Pithetaerus -

PITHETAERUS Get on with it. I'm getting bored.

HERALD Everyone everywhere is filled with admiration for your wisdom, and they award you this golden crown.

PITHETAERUS I accept. But tell me, why do the people admire me so much?

HERALD Isn't obvious? Your magnificence and illustriousness of course! You founded this glorious city Cloudcuckooland. Before you built this city, everyone was always banging on about Sparta – it was all the rage. But now the only place people want to go is Cloudcuckooland. Before people just wanted to dress like Spartans, now they want to dress like you! Birds are very fashionable on earth at the moment.

SLAVE Well, Boss, you'd better get ready for all the new visitors and make sure they treat you with the respect you deserve.
(Enter **POET**)

POET Oh noble Pithetaerus, Lord of Birds.

PITHETAERUS Your back? And what do you want now?

POET I want to become a bird like you!

PITHETAERUS Why do you want to be a bird?

POET If you give me wings, I will fly to top of the sky and sing your praises.

EUELPIDES (*Shakes his head*) Great. Here we go again.

POET I have written a poem about you. Do you want to hear it?

PITHETAERUS Oh, no, no, no!

POET Yes you will. I have composed it in *your* honour. (*He clears his throat*)

PITHETAERUS Stop! Way enough!

POET But I haven't even started yet.

PITHETAERUS I know.

POET Oh noble Pithetaerus, Lord of Birds.

EUELPIDES Please stop. I hate poetry. Especially about him.

POET (*as he is dragged away by EUELPIDES*) You may not like poetry, but that will not stop me. I'll keep on writing poems about the noble Pithetaerus. I will, I will. (Exit **POET**, enter two **SPIES**)

SPY 1 Come on! Come on! Let's find out what's going on here.

SLAVE Look, more people, Boss.

SPY 2 Where is Pithetaerus?

PITHETAERUS I suppose you two want wings as well, do you?

SPIES Yes! We want to be birds!

PITHETAERUS And who are you?

SPY 1 We are informers! Spies!

PITHETAERUS That sounds like a strange job.

SPY 2 Oh yes! We look around –

SPY 1 Going through people's dustbins –

SPY 2 Looking for their dirty secrets –

SPY 1 And when we find them –

SPIES (*together*) We see if we can make some money from them.

PITHETAERUS And you think you'd be better at this if you had wings?

SPY 1 Oh yes. Yes. You see, we informers aren't very popular.

SPY 2 Sometimes we need to just fly away.

PITHETAERUS But isn't that just a little bit dishonest?

SPY 1 We're not asking for your approval.

SPY 2 Just give us wings.

PITHETAERUS So let me get this straight. You go out there and find people's secrets. And when you get these secrets you make money from them?

SPY 1 That's just it.

PITHETAERUS And you want wings to help you do your job?

SPY 2 You've hit the nail on the head.

PITHETAERUS Ok, I've got some wings here. What do you make of these wings? (*PITHETAERUS gets out a stick*)

SPIES Ouch! Ah! Get off us!

PITHETAERUS Get away. We don't want your sort here. Get away.
(*Enter PROMETHEUS*)

PROMETHEUS Where is Pithetaerus?

PITHETAERUS And who are you?

PROMETHEUS What's the time, please?

PITHETAERUS The time? Why, it's past noon. Who are you?

PROMETHEUS What is Zeus doing?

PITHETAERUS Ah! I know who this is. You're Prometheus!

PROMETHEUS Shh! Shh! Not so loud!

PITHETAERUS Why, what's the matter, Prometheus?

PROMETHEUS Shh! Shh! Don't mention my name. Don't call me Prometheus. Call me something silly. Call me Mr. Gobius or something like that. If Zeus should see me here he'd get really cross. But, if you want me to tell you what's happening on Olympus, take this umbrella and shield me, so that the gods don't see me.

PITHETAERUS Ok, Mr. Gobius

PROMETHEUS Then listen.

PITHETAERUS I am listening! Go on.

PROMETHEUS Zeus is finished.

PITHETAERUS Really? Since when?

PROMETHEUS Since you founded Cloudcuckooland. There is not a man who now sacrifices to the gods. Not the even smallest offering! And they're all hungry. They're so hungry that they are sending some other gods here with a message.

PITHETAERUS And what is that message?

PROMETHEUS They want their sacrifices back! So Zeus is going to make peace with you and is going to give you Basileia in marriage.

PITHETAERUS Who is this Basileia?

PROMETHEUS Oh, you'd like her. If he gives you her for your wife, you will be even stronger than you are now. That is what I have come to tell you. You know that I've always been your friend. I stole fire for you!

PITHETAERUS Oh, yes! We can cook our food thanks to you.

PROMETHEUS I hate the gods, as you know.

PITHETAERUS Yes, everyone knows that.

PROMETHEUS And they hate me too. (*EUELPEDES enters eating a fried choicken drumstick, he hands one to PITHETAERUS. PROMETHEUS acts suspicious*) Anyway, I'd better scoot before they find me... (*Exit PROMETHEUS and enter POSEIDON, accompanied by HERCULES and TRIBALLUS*)

POSEIDON So this is Cloudcuckooland. Tell me, Hercules, what are we going to do now?

HERCULES I have already told you that I want to strangle that Pithetaerus.

POSEIDON But, dude, we're meant to be peace envoys.

HERCULES I know and think how peaceful it would be if I strangled him. There they are! Oi, mortals!

EUELPIDES Wait a sec. We're eating.

HERACLES Food? You have food?

EUELPIDES Yeah. These are birds that have been punished by Pithetaerus.

HERACLES Mmmmm, they look tasty.

PITHETAERUS Ah! Hercules! Welcome, welcome! What's the matter?

POSEIDON The gods have sent us to make peace.

PITHETAERUS (*ignoring this*) I'll think I'll have some more chicken.

POSEIDON We don't want to fight you. We just want peace –

HERCULES And something to eat –

PITHETAERUS Well, if Zeus gives some of his power to us birds – namely me – then I'm sure we can make peace –

EUELPIDES And you can have some food.

HERCULES I vote for peace – and some dinner.

POSEIDON You're always thinking of your stomach, you idiot. Do you really want him to be more powerful than Zeus?

PITHETAERUS Oh. I don't want to be more powerful than Zeus. But think of it like this – us birds are much closer to earth than the gods, right? We can see what's going on easier than the gods, right? So if men swear oaths by the birds, rather than, say, Zeus, we'll be able to make sure they keep their promises.

EUELPIDES (to **TRIBALLUS**) And you, what's your opinion?

TRIBALLUS (With a thick Russian accent) Da. (Grunts)

PITHETAERUS See! He approves!

HERCULES I vote for peace.

POSEIDON Ask Triballus.

HERCULES Triballus, what do you think?

TRIBALLUS Bash head with stick.

HERCULES Very well! We'll give you some of Zeus' power.

PITHETAERUS Ah! I was nearly forgetting – I want Basileia.

POSEIDON Then you don't want peace.

PITHETAERUS Ok. Bye. Euelpides, do you want some more chicken?

EUELPIDES Mmmm...This is a tasty chicken

HERCULES Poseidon, where are you off to?

POSEIDON What else is there to do?

HERACLES What else? Why, we've got to sort out peace and get some food.

POSEIDON Oh you idiot! Don't you see he's tricking us? We can't give him Basileia.

HERCULES Let's see what Triballus has to say.

TRIBALLUS Give bird pretty girl. Get us food. Me hungry.

HERCULES What he said.

POSEIDON What does he know? But have it your way.
(Exit **HERCULES**, **POSEIDON**, and **TRIBALLUS**)

PITHETAERUS

Why thank you. So it's all worked out rather well, hasn't it?
(silence) *HASN'T IT?*

CHORUS And so at the end of our play
The hero has got his own way.
He started with a plan For equality in a new land
But since he has enacted a truce
Now he is more powerful than Zeus!
So can we escape the turmoil and hubbub we call modern life?
Or is it our fate as humans to be forced to endure all this strife?
Some say it all "for the birds"
They throw up their hands and throw in the towel.
We say its the pushing for a better life that defines us mortal.
So at the end of this revelous day,
Ye, men of Athens...er TCIS, what do you say?

THE END